

**Shirlee Herrington****I042**

**From:** Sherry Guzzi <sierrawildlifecoalition@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 21, 2015 12:05 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services; Maywan Krach  
**Cc:** Ann Nichols  
**Subject:** Martis Valley West Draft EIR Comments

Placer County community Development Resource Agency  
 Environmental Coordination Services  
 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
 Auburn, CA 95603

**Re: Comments on the Martis Valley West (MVWPSP), Draft EIR**

The county's statement that "The Martis Valley West Plan would transfer residential and commercial uses from the east parcel of the plan to the west parcel, preserving the 6,376 acre east parcel" is NOT correct. Only 670 acres of the east parcel are zoned for development, and only 'development rights' on those acres are being 'transferred'. The other 5,706 acres are already "preserved", that is, NOT zoned for development, and are in no way protected by the proposed transfer from the 670 acres. And the "entire 6,376 acres" to the east of Highway 267 will only be "placed in conservation in perpetuity" through either a sale to a land trust or a recordation of a conservation easement (Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR). Your published announcements are misleading at best. It is also misleading to label the West parcel "adjacent to Northstar", to imply that it is closer to development, as it is only "adjacent" to Northstar's cross-country ski area and fishing pond, and miles from infrastructure. The East parcel zoned for development is directly across from and actually much closer to Northstar's existing roads, utilities and other infrastructure.

I042-1

This project should be denied for many reasons. The EIR admits significant and unavoidable negative impacts/cumulative effects on light and glare (9.9), and that MVWPSP will "worsen or exacerbate" "already unacceptable" traffic conditions on Highway 367 (10-1, 10-2, 10-8, 10-9). These scenic and safety impacts alone demand denial of this project. In addition, the impacts to our public forest and wildlife are unacceptable, as follows (Chapter 7, Biological Resources):

*7-1 "Disturbance or loss of common vegetation communities and wildlife habitats"* is NOT "Less than significant". Proposed development in the West parcel, along the ridge, would disrupt an important and irreplaceable wildlife corridor, which links protected areas to the west, including Granite Chief Wilderness, and to the east, such as Mt. Rose Wilderness. Wildlife corridors are not "common and abundant", as stated to justify their destruction. Most forested area for linkage is above developed areas, higher on the ridge, and mainly on the Tahoe side in National Forest, and directly adjacent to the West parcel. The East parcel currently zoned for development, which is much lower on the slope on the Truckee side, is not nearly as critical.

I042-2

*7-2 "Disturbance or loss of sensitive habitats (wetlands, riparian...)"* IS "Significant". Preliminary wetland delineation has not even been verified. These critical habitats need to be verified before any EIR is approved. The proposed "compensation" with a "contribution" to a wetland bank elsewhere will not in any way mitigate destroying precious and scarce watersheds here, all of which are needed and used by humans and wildlife alike.

I042-3

*7-5 "Direct or indirect effects on special-status wildlife species or reduction of habitats or restriction of range... or interference with movement of native... wildlife species or wildlife corridors"* is much more than "potentially significant". Proposed mitigation measures (7-5a) for yellow warbler, olive-sided flycatcher, and long-eared owl are "buffers", (7-5b) for bats "excluding" by sealing entrances and then what, scaring away (?) the bats before roost sites are "removed" (destroyed), and (7-5c) for Mountain Beavers proposing "limited operating periods"

I042-4

within 250' of any burrows – All these measures are woefully inadequate. In addition, every proposed mitigation measure is modified, repeatedly, with “to the extent feasible”, a huge loophole which means even these token measures will not happen. (Let’s be real – does Placer County have the resources to monitor any of this?).

I042-4  
cont.

And importantly, none of the “species of concern” identified in a September 2012 Assessment of Conservation Values – Martis Valley Opportunity by Conservation Biology Institute (in this case the CA spotted owl, northern goshawk, and Pacific marten) were even included in this EIR! All these species indicate that development on the East parcel would be better than on the West parcel.

Notes from that CBI report (prepared for Sierra Pacific Industries):

Spotted Owl: Only the proposed development on the West is adjacent to mapped “spotted owl home ranges and protected activity areas”. No part of the East parcel is close to spotted owl areas. In fact the coveted 112 acres on the Tahoe side of the West parcel, proposed for a huge campground, are directly above spotted owl areas.

I042-5

Northern Goshawk: The only Northern Goshawk nest located was on the west side of Northstar, and “suitable habitat for Goshawks has been identified on the Northstar property adjacent to Sierra Pacific lands.” So development on the west parcel, adjacent to Northstar, would be more disturbing for Goshawks.

Pine Marten: Maps show both proposed West and development-zoned East parcels as possible marten habitat. However, maps in the Developers' MVWPSP show there are both more high-elevation and more red-fir forest in the West parcel, which is stated to be preferred summer habitat for martens. And summer habitat ‘is more restrictive’ (important) since winter habitat can include mixed forest.

*Cumulative Impact 7-6 “Disturbance or loss of common vegetation... and wildlife habitats”* would be significant because the west parcel is a critical and irreplaceable wildlife corridor and connection, east-west along the ridge, and north-south over the ridge. (See 7-1)

I042-6

*Cumulative Impact 7-7 “Disturbance or loss of sensitive habitats”*. The developer even concludes that “potential impacts would be cumulatively significant”. The EIR statement that there are more sensitive habitats on the East parcel is only true because all 6,376 acres on the east are included. But a valid comparison would include only the 670 acres now zoned for development on the East parcel against the proposed development of the 662 acres (plus 65 acres for utility easements and an “additional portion” for access roads) on the West parcel. The remaining 5,703 acres on the east are NOT protected by MVWPSP, making that EIR statement completely false.

I042-7

*Cumulative Impact 7-10 “Direct or indirect effects on... wildlife....”* The EIR states “Implementation of the MVWPSP... would result in conversion and fragmentation of habitat, introduction of additional traffic, populations, sources of noise and air pollutant emissions, and other effects that could disturb the foraging and movement patterns of individuals, affect breeding activities and reproductive success, cause direct mortality or injury, and disturb or remove suitable habitat for some special-status wildlife species.” In fact this project would impact all our wildlife. The proposed development would not only destroy thousands of trees and degrade watersheds; it would also completely block vital wildlife corridors along the ridge. To survive, animals need to be able to move with food resources, which change seasonally and annually. Just the noise of construction, proposed to go on for 20 years, will disturb, displace and ultimately kill wildlife. Not only “special-status” species, but also our bear, deer, coyote, osprey, hawks, eagles, and a huge variety of small birds and mammals need this vital habitat, which no ‘mitigation’ can ever replace.

I042-8

All these impacts will be annoying and even unsafe for local residents and detrimental for local communities, but they will be devastating for local wildlife. The only reason for the proposed transfer of development is that ridge-top real estate on the West parcel will make multi-millions, whereas there is no market for such in the Martis Valley – other developments there have gone bankrupt, empty lots abound. The east parcel would never be developed, and everybody knows it. Martis Valley West plans to make huge profits at the expense of Lake Tahoe, local communities, and our wildlife.

I042-9

Sincerely, Sherry Guzzi, Architect for  
Sierra Wildlife Coalition  
P.O. Box 7763, Tahoe City, CA 96145  
phone 530-583-9573 or 530-320-9923

23

<b>IO42</b>	<b>Sierra Wildlife Coalition</b> <b>Sherry Guzzi</b> <b>December 21, 2015</b>
IO42-1	<p>The comment states that statements related to preserving the 6,376-acre East Parcel are not correct because only 670 acres of the East Parcel are zoned for development. Please see response to comment IO16-6. As explained in that response, if the MVWPSP is approved the preservation of the East Parcel as open space would be ensured initially by Specific Plan Policy OS-3, which requires that the East Parcel be preserved as permanent open space by August 2020. Ultimately, the preferred mechanism for the preservation is acquisition by a land trust. The comment states that it is misleading to label the West Parcel as adjacent to Northstar. Again, please see response to comment IO16-6 regarding comments on the Specific Plan. The West Parcel is located immediately south of Northstar, and is therefore more proximate to existing development than the East Parcel. The comment recommends denial of the project and cites conclusions of the Draft EIR. The Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the proposed MVWPSP into consideration when making decisions regarding the project.</p>
IO42-2	<p>The comment suggests that disturbance or loss of common vegetation communities and wildlife habitats is not less than significant as concluded in the Draft EIR and that proposed development on the West Parcel would disrupt an important wildlife corridor. Potential impacts to a full suite of common and sensitive biological resources, including vegetation communities and animal movement corridors, were analyzed and described in the Draft EIR. As required for the Draft EIR, potential impacts on these resources were evaluated based specifically on the significance criteria described on pages 7-39 to 7-40. Regarding effects on common biological resources and animal movement corridors, for purposes of the Draft EIR, an adverse effect alone does not necessarily constitute a significant impact; significance and the need to mitigate are based on the magnitude and intensity of the effect relative to existing conditions and were evaluated based specifically on the established significance criteria. Impact 7-5, beginning on page 7-53 of the Draft EIR, analyzed potential direct and indirect effects on special-status species, reduction of habitat, or restriction of range of wildlife species or interference with the movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species or wildlife corridors. The commenter's assertion that the East Parcel is not nearly as critical is not substantiated. As described in Chapter 7 of the Draft EIR, the East Parcel contains 414.7 acres of sensitive habitats (see Draft EIR Table 7-13) and provides valuable connectivity to and between large open space areas important for wildlife habitat and migration. Known, sensitive biological resources on the East Parcel are listed in Table 7-3 and mapped in Exhibit 7-2b.</p>
IO42-3	<p>The comment states that disturbance or loss of sensitive habitats, including wetlands and riparian habitat, is significant. The comment also states that the preliminary wetland delineation conducted for most of the project needs to be verified before the EIR is approved, and that the option of contributing to a wetland mitigation bank as part of the recommended mitigation for impacts to riparian habitat "will not in any way mitigate ..." impacts to these resources locally.</p> <p>The Draft EIR quantifies the estimated maximum amount of sensitive habitats that could be affected under project implementation and concludes that the loss or degradation of these sensitive habitats would be a significant impact, and proposes mitigation accordingly. A preliminary wetland delineation was completed in June and October 2014 for the entire West Parcel and the entire East Parcel; however, verification of the preliminary delineation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has not occurred prior to the preparation of the Draft EIR. Potential wetlands and other waters of the U.S. within the offsite utilities corridor have</p>

not been delineated prior to the preparation of the Draft EIR. Verification of potential wetlands by USACE, precise quantification of impacts on jurisdictional wetlands based on detailed project designs, and compensation for impacts to achieve a no-net-loss would be part of the permitting process for the project and is a requirement of Mitigation Measure 7-2a (Conduct delineation of waters of the United States and obtain authorization for fill and required permits). Although this measure would need to be implemented and relevant permits must be secured prior to project construction (as a condition of approval), completion or verification of a wetland delineation is not a requirement for approval of the EIR, particularly for a program-level environmental review.

Regarding the adequacy of contributing to a mitigation bank as mitigation for impacts to riparian/wetland resources, the comment appears to refer to Mitigation Measure 7-2b (Obtain and comply with a lake and streambed alteration agreement; compensate for unavoidable loss of stream and riparian habitat). This mitigation measure requires the project developer to compensate for permanent loss of riparian habitat at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio through contributions to a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved wetland mitigation bank or through the development and implementation of a Compensatory Stream and Riparian Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for creating or restoring in-kind habitat in the surrounding area. This mitigation measure applies to impacts on stream and associated riparian habitats regulated specifically by CDFW. The appropriate compensation approach would be identified and developed in consultation with CDFW during the Streambed Alteration Agreement permitting process, as necessary, based on the specific location, amount, and types of impacts, and in consideration of available compensation opportunities locally (e.g., restoring in-kind habitat) or otherwise (e.g., through participation in a wetland mitigation bank).

IO42-4

The comment states that the potential impact related to direct or indirect effects on special-status wildlife species, reduction of habitats or restriction of the range of wildlife species, or effects on wildlife movements or corridors (Impact 7-5) is more than “potentially significant” as concluded in the Draft EIR, and that proposed mitigation for impacts on special-status species are inadequate. The comment also objects to the inclusion of the phrase “to the extent feasible” in portions of the proposed mitigation measures, asserting that it creates a loophole to allow nonexecution of the measures. The general comment does not describe why the impact would be greater than potentially significant. For purposes of the Draft EIR, the conclusion of “potentially significant” is essentially the same as a “significant” finding; both conclusions require mitigation to reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level (see page 4-2 of the Draft EIR). The term “potentially” was used in light of uncertainty regarding whether the proposed project would actually affect some of the special-status species analyzed in the Draft EIR. Determining a species’ potential for occurrence and whether project implementation could affect a special-status species was based primarily on the types, extent, and quality of habitats (i.e., habitat suitability) in the study area observed during the surveys; the proximity of the study area to known extant occurrences of the species; and the regional distribution and abundance of the species (i.e., whether the project area overlapped with the species’ known range). Any special-status species that could occur in the region and for which suitable habitat is present in the study area was conservatively assumed to potentially occur and be affected by project implementation.

Some mitigation measures proposed for impacts to biological resources state that some of the provisions would be implemented “to the extent feasible,” recognizing that detailed project designs have not been developed and unforeseen circumstances may affect whether certain elements of the proposed mitigation may be feasible from a design or implementation standpoint. However, in all of those cases, the mitigation measures provide alternative requirements for any provisions that may be identified as infeasible in the future. For example, Mitigation Measure 7-5a (Conduct preconstruction surveys for nesting special-

status birds, and implement a limited operating period if necessary) states: “If an active nest is located during the preconstruction surveys, the biologist shall notify CDFW. If necessary, modifications to the project design to avoid removal of occupied habitat shall be evaluated and implemented, to the extent feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, appropriate buffers around nests and limited operating periods shall be established through consultation with CDFW to avoid disturbances during the sensitive nesting season.” In regard to the question as to whether the County would have the resources to implement such mitigation, the developer typically funds such mitigation and monitoring measures.

IO42-5

The comment states that none of the species of concern identified in *Assessment of Conservation Values, Martis Valley Opportunity East and West Parcels* (CBI 2012) were evaluated in the EIR. These species include California spotted owl, northern goshawk, and Sierra marten (formerly American marten or Pacific marten).

As described on page 7-2 of the Draft EIR, the Conservation Biology Institute (CBI) report (CBI 2012) referenced in the comment was reviewed as part of the analysis. All of the species of concern discussed in the CBI report were addressed in the Draft EIR. The known and potential for occurrence of these species are described in Section 7.1, “Environmental Setting,” and Impact 7-5 on pages 7-53 to 7-60 of the Draft EIR describe potential impacts of project implementation on these species.

IO42-6

The comment states that Cumulative Impact 7-6 (Disturbance or loss of common vegetation communities and wildlife habitats) would be significant because “the west parcel is a critical and irreplaceable wildlife corridor and connection, east-west along the ridge, and north-south over the ridge.”

Please see response to comment IO42-2, which applies to this comment as well. Cumulative effects related to habitat fragmentation and other impacts on wildlife movement corridors are also addressed in Cumulative Impact 7-10 of the Draft EIR.

IO42-7

This comment on Cumulative Impact 7-7 (Disturbance or loss of sensitive habitat) asserts that the Draft EIR inappropriately compares the acreages of sensitive habitats on the West Parcel and East Parcel by including the entire 6,376 acres on the East Parcel, and states that a valid comparison would instead be of the amount of sensitive habitats in the proposed developable area on the West Parcel (662 acres total) and the MVCP developable area on the East Parcel (670 acres). The comment also states that the remaining 5,703 acres on the East Parcel that are not within the MVCP developable area would not be protected under the MVWPSP.

The Draft EIR objectively presents the acreages of sensitive habitats on the West Parcel (total), West Parcel 662-acre proposed development area, East Parcel (total), and East Parcel 670-acre MVCP developable area; and it does not use comparisons of acreages between the East Parcel and West Parcel to support the impact analysis or significance conclusions regarding effects on sensitive habitats. The Draft EIR does state that the MVWPSP proposes to preserve the East Parcel, which includes substantial acreage of sensitive habitats; this is an accurate statement. The analysis describes and considers the whole of the proposed project, which includes development on the West Parcel and preservation of the East Parcel. However, for purposes of the Draft EIR analysis and significance conclusions, impacts on sensitive habitats on the West Parcel were not treated as being offset or mitigated by benefits of preserving the East Parcel. For example, Impact 7-2 (Disturbance or loss of sensitive habitats) concludes that the loss or degradation of sensitive habitats on the West Parcel would be significant, independent of benefits gained through preserving the East Parcel. The Draft EIR concluded that the project’s contribution to the cumulative impact on sensitive habitats (Cumulative Impact 7-7) would not be cumulatively considerable based on

existing regulations and proposed mitigation to achieve a no-net-loss of sensitive habitats, plus benefits of protecting habitat on the East Parcel.

IO42-8

The comment states that the MVWPSP would adversely affect all wildlife species in the area, not just special-status species as were focused on in the impact analysis.

Impacts to habitat for common wildlife species were addressed in Impact 7-1 (Disturbance or loss of common vegetation communities and wildlife habitats), Cumulative Impact 7-6 (Disturbance or loss of common vegetation communities and wildlife habitats), and Cumulative Impact 7-10 (Cumulative direct or indirect effects on special-status wildlife species or reduction of habitats or restriction of range of wildlife species or interference with the movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species or wildlife corridors). See response to comment IO42-2, above regarding determinations of significance in the Draft EIR.

IO42-9

The comment addresses the proposed project and refers to previous comments. See responses to comments IO42-1 through IO42-8.

**Shirlee Herrington****I043**

**From:** Kathleen <kstephen@dcn.davis.ca.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2015 8:31 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** No Martis Valley Project

Dear Placer County Council.

I very concerned with the Martis Valley Project to transfer 760 units & 6.6 acres of commercial or any development on any portion east or west. This is a high fire danger and delicate eco system.

This area should be left natural for future generations to enjoy and learn about how to live within nature & wild animals' natural habitat.

Please leave this land natural.

Thank you,  
Kathleen Stephens  
[kstephen@dcn.davis.ca.us](mailto:kstephen@dcn.davis.ca.us)  
5889 Sudan Rd  
Carnelian Bay, Ca 96140

I043-1

**I043**

---

**Kathleen Stephens**  
**November 23, 2015**

---

I043-1

The comment expresses concerns related to fire danger and effects on the ecosystem. The environmental effects of the MVWPSP are discussed throughout the Draft EIR (see Chapters 5 through 18 for an analysis of specific resources areas). Impacts related to wildland fire hazards associated with the project are specifically evaluated in Impact 18-4. See also Master Response 9 for a discussion of emergency response and evacuation. The comment expresses concern related to MVWPSP approval. The comment does not specifically address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIR; however, the Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the proposed MVWPSP into consideration when making decisions regarding the project.



IO44

**From:** [theochoas3@charter.net](mailto:theochoas3@charter.net) [mailto:[theochoas3@charter.net](mailto:theochoas3@charter.net)]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 02, 2015 10:42 AM  
**To:** Michael Johnson  
**Subject:** Martis Valley West Draft EIR

To: Michael Johnson

Placer County Planning Director

We would like to request that the public comment period for the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan DEIR be extended for 15 days. That will make the comment period 60 days, instead of only 45 days.

This is a large project that will have many impacts on the Tahoe Area. The DEIR is extensive and will require a thorough analysis. We would appreciate the extra time so the public can have plenty of time to study and then comment on the plan.

IO44-1

Thank you,

Cindy Ochoa

Chair - Tahoe Area Sierra Club

**I044**

---

**Tahoe Area Sierra Club  
Cindy Ochoa, Chair  
November 2, 2015**

---

**I044-1**

The comment requests that the public review period be extended. The Draft EIR was released on October 22, 2015 for public review and comment for a 45-day period (ending December 7, 2015). The Draft EIR comment period was extended by 15 days, for a total review period of 60 days, ending December 22, 2015 (as identified on the County's website). The additional review time is not warranted, and the Tahoe Area Sierra Club did submit a comment letter jointly with Friends of West Shore (see Comment Letter OI18).



## TAHOE RIM TRAIL ASSOCIATION

HIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKING, HORSEBACK RIDING

*"a trail like no other"*

1045

December 18, 2015

Stacy Wydra  
Placer County, Planning Services Division  
3091 County Center Drive  
Auburn, CA 95603

Dear Ms. Wydra:

After reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association (TRTA) would like to provide Placer County with comments regarding the document. The comments provided by the TRTA are focused on chapter 17 regarding recreation and the potential impacts the project will have on existing recreational facilities, the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT) specifically, and the TRT trail user experience. The TRTA's main concern in the document is its assumption that the MVWPSP will have less than significant impacts on existing recreation facilities and the user experience and therefore no mitigation steps are needed. The TRTA has outlined its thoughts on potential impacts below.

### Impacts to the Trail:

The DEIR appears to make the assumption that because of the abundance of recreational activities and opportunities in the area there will be no significant impacts and no need for mitigation measures to address the potential increase in use on existing recreational infrastructure including the Tahoe Rim Trail. In section 17-1: Impacts on existing recreational facilities, the DEIR states, "because there are ample recreational resources available and the project would include additional recreational opportunities, no substantial physical deterioration of existing recreation resources and facilities would occur." The Tahoe Rim Trail is a world class trail system that draws users from around the world. The trail is the largest trail network in the area and provides connections as far north as Canada and as far south as Mexico. Outdoor enthusiasts traveling to the Tahoe Basin generally consider enjoying the TRT, whether by foot, horse, or bike an essential experience to include in their trip. Based on this information, the assumption in the DEIR that this increased use will be dispersed and therefore of no impact is flawed. Simply put, this project will increase use of the Tahoe Rim Trail which will, over time, increase the need for maintenance and rehabilitation. The TRTA is also concerned that due to the proximity of the neighborhoods to the TRT, there is the possibility that the area will become crisscrossed with social

1045-1

1045-2

PO Box 3267  
128 Market St. Ste. 3E  
Stateline, NV 89449

775.298.4485  
fax 775.624.9773

info@tahoerimtrail.org  
www.tahoerimtrail.org

trails weaving from different areas of the neighborhoods and the development to the Tahoe Rim Trail. The DEIR does discuss building connector trails, but the TRTA would like to see a concrete plan for how the project will encourage users to utilize newly created designated trails versus walking from their backyard the shortest distance to the TRT.

IO45-2  
cont.

#### **Impacts to the User Experience:**

The TRTA's greatest concern with the project is how it will change the overall character of the Tahoe Rim Trail in the area. Currently, the Tahoe Rim Trail leaves Tahoe City and, while it crosses many interspersed trails and a few dirt roads, it does not meet any major development until it reaches Hwy 267. To the east of the proposed project there is an even more pronounced wilderness feel and after leaving the Brockway Summit area, the trail crosses into Mt. Rose Wilderness before reaching Hwy 431. Therefore the proximity of the development would cause a significant change in the Tahoe Rim Trail experience. The DEIR discusses buffers, setbacks, and design standards that would reduce visual and noise impacts associated with the project but the fact remains that the project will change the area from undeveloped forest land to a large development with 760 residences and commercial areas. The proposed neighborhood commercial site will be the closest part of the development to the Tahoe Rim Trail. While the proposed housing is estimated to only have 20% occupancy, the commercial area would be much higher. This commercial development along with 75ft tall buildings, night light pollution, construction noise, increased use of the Fiberboard freeway, increased traffic at nearby trailheads will have cumulative negative impacts on the user experience.

IO45-3

To address these potential impacts, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association recommends the DEIR require the creation of a Trail Partnership Agreement which would create a system for identifying and monitoring impacts to the Tahoe Rim Trail and establish triggers that would require mitigation measures be taken to remedy negative impacts. The project developer has already communicated with the Tahoe Rim Trail Association their desire to work with local trail organizations to address trail maintenance in this area and the impacts of additional trail users from their proposed project. The Tahoe Rim Trail Association looks forward to continuing work with the developer to formalize an agreement if the project is approved.

Lastly, if this project is approved, the Tahoe Rim Trail Association believes a straight forward mitigation step that will provide the most impact would be to completely reroute the Tahoe Rim Trail in the area to move it below (south of) the Fiberboard Freeway and further from the project site. The Tahoe Rim Trail currently crosses the Fiberboard Freeway twice in the area and is already showing negative impacts from use that has far outpaced the design parameters for sustainability of the trail. Rerouting the Tahoe Rim Trail away from the project will not only lessen the project's impact on the trail and trail experience but improve the condition and sustainability of the trail in this area.

IO45-4

Overall, the TRTA sees both opportunity and challenges with this project. If the project is approved, a large swath of land adjacent to the TRT on the east side of Hwy 267 will be permanently conserved providing additional recreational opportunities and increasing the options for reroutes of the TRT off several of the dirt roads in the area which could significantly improve the TRT trail user experience on the east side of Brockway Summit. At the same time,

IO45-5

development on the west side of Brockway Summit will inevitably change the character of the Tahoe Rim Trail in this area.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan. If you have any further questions regarding the Tahoe Rim Trail Association's comments please contact Mary Bennington, TRTA Executive Director, at [maryb@tahoerimtrail.org](mailto:maryb@tahoerimtrail.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Bennington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mary Bennington

1045-5  
cont.

---

**IO45****Tahoe Rim Trail Association  
Mary Bennington, Executive Director  
December 18, 2015**

---

**IO45-1**

The comment includes an introductory statement, noting that comments are focused on the project's potential impacts to recreational facilities. The comment states that the MVWPSP would increase the use of the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT), which would increase the need for maintenance and rehabilitation. As noted in the comment, the Draft EIR recognizes that the TRT is an important recreational facility in the vicinity of the proposed MVWPSP, and discusses the TRT throughout Chapter 17 (specifically, see pages 17-3 and 17-4). The Draft EIR analysis does not assume no impact to the TRT, but rather determines that impacts to existing recreation facilities (including the TRT) would be less than significant based on substantial evidence provided in Impacts 17-1 and 17-2 (and other cited sections of the Draft EIR). The comment quotes a portion of the impact discussion from the impact summary, but the full impact discussion also discloses that some increase in the number of users is expected. The conclusion that the project itself would not result in an increase in use of the TRT such that additional physical deterioration would occur is based on several factors, including the availability of recreation resources. The comment does not offer additional evidence to support a conclusion that the project would result in greater physical deterioration of the TRT over that considered in the impact analysis on Draft EIR pages 17-13 through 17-15.

**IO45-2**

The comment raises concerns related to user-made informal connections to access the TRT. As noted in the comment, the MVWPSP proposes to establish trail connections to existing trails in consultation with NCSD and other organizations involved in trail development to identify the appropriate connection from internal trails to regional trail networks, as required by MVWPSP Policy OS-4 and identified in Impact 17-1 on page 17-13. The intent of such connections is to prevent multiple user-created trails.

**IO45-3**

The comment raises concerns that the MVWPSP could change the user experience on the TRT. This concern is evaluated in Chapter 17, "Public Services and Recreation," Impact 17-1, "Impacts on existing recreation facilities," on pages 17-13 through 17-15. Therein, it is disclosed that recreationists could be exposed to new noises or changes in views of the West Parcel. However, the TRT is separated from the West Parcel development area by a ridge. In addition, a number of efforts would be undertaken during implementation of the MVWPSP to minimize visual impacts and noise impacts that could affect the experience of recreation users on lands surrounding the West Parcel. (See Chapter 9, "Visual Resources," and Chapter 13, "Noise," for analyses considering the proposed project's scenic resources and noise impacts, respectively.) Implementation of MVWPSP policies would place the majority of the development in areas that are not visible from outside the MVWPSP site. As described on page 9-25 of the Draft EIR, several locations along the Tahoe Rim Trail were tested for visibility of the West Parcel development area. In all cases, a ridge (and substantial tree coverage) separates the trail from the development area and structures would not be visible. In one location the Tahoe Rim Trail is closer to the development area than the Fibreboard Freeway (KOP 3), so this location was given additional consideration. However, at this site, the development site would be above and behind a steep hillside, which would block the development from views from the Tahoe Rim Trail. Building materials would be selected for unobtrusive and non-glare characteristics. Colors and glazing of buildings would minimize visibility and blend with the character of the site, and new lighting would limit or minimize glare and light pollution (MVWPSP Policies ER-SR4 and ER-SR5). Noise-generating areas of the MVWPSP would be shielded or oriented away from noise-sensitive land uses (i.e., recreation users on lands adjacent to the project site) (MVWPSP Policy ER-N3). The comment also expresses concern related to recreation user experience as a result of nearby commercial uses, 75-foot-tall buildings, increased use of the Fibreboard Freeway and

increased traffic at nearby trailheads. The Draft EIR addresses these concerns as part of Impact 17-1 on page 17-14, including effects on user experience on the Fibreboard Freeway, but is revised as follows to clarify the project applicant's involvement with trail development organizations and address the use of trailheads:

As shown in Exhibit 17-1, several recreation trails are in close proximity to the West Parcel, including Northstar trails to the north and west, the paved Fibreboard Freeway south of the West Parcel development area, and the TRT south of the West Parcel development area. There are also approximately 16 miles of trails within the West Parcel that are currently leased by CNL/Vail Resorts for recreational purposes. The TRT Brockway Summit trailhead is located approximately a half mile southeast of the West Parcel. However, because the MVWPSP would construct internal trail connections to regional trails, substantial increased use of nearby trailheads is not anticipated. The Fibreboard Freeway and the TRT are located within the Tahoe Basin and are separated from the West Parcel by a ridge, which serves as a natural visual barrier between recreation trails and roads south of the West Parcel. As discussed in Section 17.1.1, "Recreation," average daily use of the TRT in summer 2014 west of Brockway Summit and directly south of the West Parcel was 30 users and average daily use of the TRT east of Brockway Summit was 157 users. Implementation of the MVWPSP would increase the use of existing recreation facilities by introducing new residents and visitors to the West Parcel. Because it is estimated that only 20 percent of the residential population would be full-time residents (see Chapter 3, "Project Description"), and because the MVWPSP project site and surrounding area contain extensive trail resources for use by residents and visitors, the project is not anticipated to result in an increase in use of these trails such that additional physical deterioration would occur. To minimize the potential for residents to establish new user-made trails, the MVWPSP would develop, in consultation with NCSD and other organizations involved in trail development (MVWPSP Policy OS-4), approximately 14 miles of multi-use recreation trails on the West Parcel with connections to the trail system west of the West Parcel development area.

This comment also recommends a Trail Partnership Agreement to monitor impacts on the TRT. Impacts on recreation facilities are determined to be less than significant as discussed in Draft EIR Impacts 17-1 and 17-2. Therefore, no mitigation is required. However, MVWPSP Policy OS-4 requires that the applicant work with organizations involved in trail development to identify the appropriate connections from internal trails to regional trail networks. The applicant will also continue to work with the TRT Association to address project-related TRT concerns.

- IO45-4      The comment recommends mitigation that would involve rerouting the TRT away from the MVWPSP, south of Fibreboard Freeway. Because impacts to recreation facilities are determined to be less than significant, as discussed in Draft EIR Impacts 17-1 and 17-2, no mitigation is required. Nonetheless, as required by MVWPSP Policy OS-4, the applicant will continue to consult with TRTA to address project-related TRT concerns.
- IO45-5      The comment notes opportunities for improvements to the TRT related to the proposed preservation of the East Parcel, but also notes concerns regarding changes in the character of the TRT due to the proposed development of the West Parcel. Please see responses to comments provided above. The Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the proposed MVWPSP into consideration when making decisions regarding the project.

**Shirlee Herrington****1046**

**From:** Scott Tieche <scott@tahoescott.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 07, 2015 2:33 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** Martis Valley West

To whom it may concern:

The draft EIR on Martis Valley West is seriously flawed: Here is just one of the many major flaws from the foundation of the report that requires serious scrutiny. The report starts with the insinuation that 1,360 units were approved on the Martis Valley East property. The fact is Martis Valle East is not approved, because it was never even applied for. At the county's November meeting in Kings Beach it was stated repeatedly that Martis Valley East was **slated** for development: Not! Slated means scheduled and it can't be scheduled if it was never even applied for let alone approved. Further, that 1,360 number came from a conceptual Martis Valley Community plan done back in the 1990's. If Martis Valley East was applied for today it would come under proper scrutiny and the number of approved units would certainly be less than the 1,360 envisioned preceding all the development that has happened in the region since then.

**1046-1**

Please, please take a very hard look at this EIR and understand its many flaws. The reason there are so many flaws is because the whole thing is such a bad idea and they have to start on a false premise.

Respectfully submitted, Scott Tieche



---

**I046****Scott Tieche  
December 7, 2015**

---

**I046-1**

The comment states that the EIR inaccurately suggests that 1,360 units were approved for development of the Martis Valley East property. The Draft EIR describes the existing land use designations and zoning on the East Parcel as defined by the Martis Valley Community Plan (MVCP), which designates approximately 670 acres of the East Parcel for Low Density Residential, allowing up to 1,360 residential units, another 6.6 acres is designated as General Commercial, and the remainder is designated Forest. The Draft EIR does not state that 1,360 units are approved for development on the East Parcel. Rather, the Draft EIR describes the 1,360 residential units on the East Parcel as “allowable” based on existing land use designations and zoning in the MVCP and Placer County General Plan. The proposed MVWPSP Project is a proposal to change the allowable land uses currently identified for the East and West Parcels. Therefore, discussion of the existing land uses and the development allowed by those designations is pertinent to the evaluation of the project’s impacts. Please see also response to comment I018-5, regarding consistency of the MVWPSP with the Placer County General Plan and MVCP, as well as Master Response 3 regarding Baseline.

1047



December 18, 2015

Mr. Michael J. Johnson, AICP, Director  
Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Ms. Stacy Wydra, Project Planner  
Attention: Environmental Coordination Services  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603

**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)  
Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan (MVWPSP)  
Submitted via e-mail to [cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov)**

Dear Mr. Johnson and Ms. Wydra:

Thank you to Placer County for extending the comment period on the MVWPSP DEIR. We have taken the opportunity provided to conduct a more detailed review of the identified roadway Level of Service (LOS) impacts, the discussion of Transit Services Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (Section 10, Transportation and Circulation) along the State Route 267 corridor, and the project alternatives described in Section 19 (Alternatives).

**We appreciate and actively endorse Mitigation Measure 10-5b: Join and maintain membership in the Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association.** This measure is consistent with the requirement Placer County has included as part of the mitigation package for other major development projects in eastern Placer County within the TNT/TMA sphere of activities and membership area.

#### **Non-Auto Mobility**

In our view, like the earlier Notice of Preparation (NOP), the DEIR is thin on recognizing the importance of public transit and non-auto multi-modal access in connection with the areas proposed for development and in the broader context of the North Lake Tahoe-Truckee Resort Triangle. There is growing evidence that successful destination resorts feature transit service and extensive multi-use path and trail networks. Developments envisioned in the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan must embrace multi-modal planning for success.

1047-1

1047-2

### Transit

As of December 14, 2015, **Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit** (new brand for TART) began year around service on the SR 267 corridor. Also note that TART ridership data is now available for the summer of 2015. This data includes summer season ridership on the full length of the SR 267 corridor. Please incorporate the most recent ridership data and service schedules into the MVWPSP EIR and adjust proposed developer mitigation measures accordingly.

As Placer County is aware, a diverse group of stakeholders, including Placer County, is working to develop a Transit Vision for the Resort Triangle region. This vision includes the following goals:

- Visitors can have a well-rounded quality stay in the Region without a car – convenient transit is available from the airport to lodging, to activity centers, to dining/shopping, and back to the airport.
- Residents have frequent and free transit access through all corridors of the region, including year-round evening service.
- Everyone benefits from better mobility throughout the region, a stronger economy, and environmental benefits.
- A regional public transit system serves all of North Lake Tahoe-Truckee, from Tahoma to Incline Village to Truckee year round and to Donner Summit in winter.
- Is free to the passenger – no fares.
- Uses new technologies to make transit convenient.
- Enhances the region's competitiveness as a destination resort.
- Expands services to employees, customers, seniors, and persons with disabilities.
- Provides environmental, traffic, and parking benefits.

We respectfully request that the EIR/EIS for the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan incorporate a detailed discussion of the importance of non-auto mobility with an emphasis on multi-use trails in a connected network and public transit services consistent with the emerging Transit Vision for the North Lake-Truckee Resort Triangle.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Under "Caltrans District 3 State Highways Bicycle Facility Plan" (Pages 10-14 and 10-15), the DEIR states: "For the segment of SR 267 from the Placer County/Nevada County line to Brockway Summit, the local jurisdiction (Placer County) recommends Class II bike lanes, while Caltrans recommends "Share the Road" designation. For the segment of SR 267 from Brockway to SR 28, the local jurisdiction (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency) recommends Class II bike lanes, while Caltrans recommends a Class III bike route." **The TNT/TMA strongly and actively supports the recommendations of Placer County and TRPA for Class II bike lanes on SR 267 from the Nevada County/Placer County line to State Route 28 in Kings Beach.**

1047-3

1047-4

TNT/TMA also actively supports final planning and construction of all segments of the Martis Valley Trail Project (MVT). As part of the project proponent's stated commitment to trails, the developer should be required to help fund construction of the MVT segment proposed to connect the Northstar area to the ridgeline above Lake Tahoe (MVT Segment 4). This assumes that Segment 4 remains to be constructed when/if the MWWPSP developed is approved to proceed.

1047-5

#### **Roadway Level of Service (LOS)**

We believe anyone reading the DEIR would share a concern about the roadway and intersection Level of Service impacts identified along the full length of the SR 267 corridor from Interstate 80 to the junction with State Route 28 in Kings Beach. Degraded LOS impacts transit services as well as other vehicles. In particular, the DEIR statements quoted below caught our attention:

#### **Section 10.3.4 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

##### **Impact 10-1: Impacts to Intersection Operations (Page 10-27)**

"The proposed project would worsen already unacceptable operations (i.e., already beyond the acceptable threshold) at the SR 267/I-80 West Bound ramps, SR 267/Schaffer Mill Road/Truckee Airport Road and SR 267/Highlands View Road intersections during the winter peak hour. This would be a **significant impact**."

"During the winter peak hour, five of the study intersections would operate at acceptable levels of service, while the following three study intersections would degrade already unacceptable operations, as follows:

- SR 267/I-80 West Bound Ramps: LOS E to F (27-second increase in delay)
- SR 267/Schaffer Mill Road/Truckee Airport Road: LOS E to F (24-second increase in delay)
- SR 267 Highlands View Road: (LOS E to F (38-second increase in delay)."

1047-6

##### **Under Significance after Mitigation (Page 10-28)**

"However, improvements on State facilities require approval from Caltrans. Placer County cannot guarantee that Caltrans would optimize signal timing; therefore, the impacts at the SR 267/I-80 West Bound ramps and SR 267/Schaffer Mill Road/Truckee Airport Road Intersections would be **significant and unavoidable**."

##### **Impact 10-2: Impacts to roadway segments (Page 10-29)**

"The proposed project would worsen traffic congestion on the five SR 267 segments between the Town of Truckee/Placer County Line and SR 28, resulting in a segment either degrading from acceptable LOS D to unacceptable LOS E, or exacerbating conditions on a segment operating at an unacceptable LOS E by an increase in V/C ratio (volume to capacity ratio) of 0.05 or more, for both summer and winter peak hours. This would be a **significant impact**."

##### **Under Significance after Mitigation (Page 10-31)**

"The widening of SR 267 to four lanes from the County line to Brockway Summit is included in the CIP (Placer County Tahoe Region Benefit District Capital Improvement Program). This improvement would result in acceptable levels of service under existing-plus-project conditions for the roadway segment from the Placer County Line to the Project Access Roadway. The estimated cost of this improvement is \$32.4 million, of which \$13.9 million is assumed to come from the State and \$18.5 million is assumed to come from County traffic impact fees."

"The Placer County CIP does not include the widening of SR 267 from Brockway Summit to SR 28; therefore, there would be no feasible mitigation for the significant impact of the project on the roadway segment from the Project Access Roadway to SR 28."

"The mitigation measure would ensure that the project pays its fair share fee to the Placer County Countywide Traffic Fee Program. Although the project would pay traffic fees for applicable CIP projects, including future widening of SR 267 to four lanes between Brockway Road and Brockway Summit, it is not feasible for the project itself to fund the SR 267 widening, and it is unlikely that the improvement would be constructed before the project is implemented. In addition, there is no feasible mitigation to improve the adversely affected roadway segment from the Project Access Roadway to SR 28. Therefore, the project's impact on roadway segments would remain significant and unavoidable."

### 10.3.5 Cumulative Conditions

#### Cumulative Conditions Traffic Volume Forecasts

Under **Cumulative Conditions Roadway Improvements** (Page 10-37)

"The (Caltrans) *Transportation Corridor Concept Report, State Route 267* identifies future improvements to SR 267 including the extension of the existing southbound truck-climbing lane from Northstar Drive to Brockway Summit. The TCR also states the following: In order to meet the Concept LOS, the facility will ultimately need to be widened to four lanes."

"The Placer County CIP, discussed above, identifies the following intersection and roadway improvements needed in Placer County, including:

- Widening SR 267 to 4 lanes from the Town of Truckee line to Brockway Summit
- Intersection improvements at SR 267 and Schaffer Mille Road/Truckee Airport Road
- Intersection improvements at SR 267/Northstar Drive
- Intersection improvements at SR 267/SR 28

"The Town of Truckee Traffic Fee Impact Program (TIF) identifies the following intersection and roadway improvements needed in the Town of Truckee, including:

- SR 267/I-80 Westbound Ramps - Construct 2-lane roundabout
- SR 267/I-80 Eastbound Ramps -Construct 2-lane roundabout
- SR 267/Brockway Road - Construct roundabout or equivalent improvement
- SR 267 from Brockway Summit Road to the Town of Truckee/Placer County line - Widen to 4 lanes."

On page 10-39:

"Although these improvements are included in the Placer County CIP and the Town of Truckee TIF, they are owned and operated by Caltrans. There is no assurance Caltrans will make these improvements within the 2034 horizon year; therefore, the cumulative conditions analysis assumes that SR 267 remains in its 2-lane rural highway condition."

Under **Cumulative Impact 10.9: Cumulative impacts to roadway segments** (Page 10-43)

"As a two-lane highway, SR 267 would continue to operate at unacceptable levels of service on five of the seven study segments during the summer peak hour without the proposed project, and all seven segments would operate at unacceptable levels of service during the winter peak hour without the proposed project."

1047-6  
cont.

"For the two SR 267 segments located in the Town of Truckee, the project would result in a significant impact on the segment from Brockway Road to the Town of Truckee/Placer County line during the winter peak, as the project would increase the V/C ratio of 0.05 (an increase of 0.05 or more is considered significant)."

"For the five SR 267 roadway segments located in Placer County, the project would result in a significant impact at all five segments during both the summer and winter peak hours, in all cases because it would result in an increase in V/C ratio of 0.05 or greater than segments projected to operate unacceptably without the project. Therefore, the project's contribution to significant, cumulative roadway segment impacts **would be cumulatively considerable.**"

Given the about identified impacts of degraded LOS, particularly impacts from the Proposed Project, we urge Placer County to give serious consideration to a Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan alternative that reduces LOS impacts, one that includes a greater emphasis on transit and non-auto mobility.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Jaime Wright  
Executive Director



Steve Teshara  
Planning Advisor

1047-6  
cont.

<b>IO47</b>	<b>Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association</b> <b>Jaime Wright, Executive Director</b> <b>Steve Teshara, Planning Advisor</b> <b>December 18, 2015</b>
IO47-1	<p>The comment provides an introduction to the comments provided in the letter. Please see the responses below to the detailed comments to Letter IO47. The comment also expresses support for Mitigation Measure 10-5b, which involves joining and maintaining membership in the Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TNT TMA). The comment is noted.</p>
IO47-2	<p>The comment suggests that the Draft EIR does not sufficiently recognize the importance of multi-modal planning, but does not provide evidence as to what additional analysis or measures would be necessary. Transit services are described and addressed in Chapter 10, “Transportation and Circulation,” of the Draft EIR.</p> <p>As discussed in other responses to comments, the project proposes to implement a shuttle with the 340th unit. The shuttle would travel to local destinations, including Northstar. The project shuttle could be coordinated with other shuttles and transit service in the project vicinity. The County is in the process of updating the TART Systems Plan. The Plan would serve the “resort triangle” (Incline Village/Kings Beach/North Lake Tahoe/Tahoe City on the “bottom leg” of the triangle, Alpine Meadows/Squaw Valley to Truckee on the westerly leg, and Truckee/Northstar to Kings Beach on the easterly leg) with much more comprehensive transit service, including year-round nighttime service and many other transit enhancements. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 10-5a to establish a new Zone of Benefit or annex into a pre-existing Zone of Benefit would provide funding for improvements to transit along the SR 267 corridor. By joining and maintaining membership in the TNT/TMA, via Mitigation Measure 10-5b, the project would provide funding to advocate for enhanced transit and other forms of multimodal transportation. Mitigation Measure 10-2 requires that the project pay its fair share of future improvements as outlined in the Tahoe Benefit District of the Countywide CIP; this includes the purchase of two transit vehicles, Tahoe City transit improvements, CNG upgrades at Cabin Creek for TART, and transit shelters at various locations.</p>
IO47-3	<p>The comment requests the inclusion of TART ridership data that is now available for the summer of 2015. The Draft EIR included the ridership data available at the time of the analysis. Please also see response to comment IO41-46 regarding transit ridership estimates.</p> <p>The comment also explains that a Transit Vision for the Resort Triangle is being developed. Please see response to comment IO47-2, above.</p>
IO47-4	<p>The comment expresses support for Class II bike lanes on SR 267 from the Nevada County/Placer County line to SR 28 in Kings Beach. The comment is noted.</p>
IO47-5	<p>The comment expresses support for planning and construction of the Martis Valley Trail Project and suggests that the project should be required to help fund construction of a section of this trail. Such funding is not required to mitigate recreation impacts. The Martis Valley Trail is discussed in Chapter 17, “Public Services,” of the Draft EIR (see pages 17-4, 17-13, and 17-21). For analysis of the project’s impacts related to recreation facilities, see Impacts 17-1, 17-2, and Cumulative Impact 17-6 of the Draft EIR, which are determined to be less than significant. Further, as stated on page 17-13, per MVWPSP Policy OS-4, project-related trails that would connect to the Northstar trail system, including the Tompkins Trail and future Martis Valley Trail, would be coordinated with NCSD.</p>
IO47-6	<p>The comment raises concerns regarding LOS impacts disclosed in Chapter 10 of the Draft EIR and urges Placer County to consider an alternative that reduces LOS impacts and has greater emphasis on transit. Please see Master Response 10 regarding project alternatives.</p>

530.550.8760  
P.O. Box 8568  
Truckee, CA 96162  
truckeeriverwc.org  
#truckeeriverday

California Department  
of Fish and Wildlife

California Department  
of Parks and Recreation

California Department  
of Water Resources

California Fly Fisher  
Magazine

Glenshire Homeowners  
Association

DMB/Highlands Group, LLC

East West Partners

Friends of Squaw Creek

KidZone Museum

Lahontan Regional  
Water Quality  
Control Board

Mountain Area  
Preservation

Nevada County

North Lake Tahoe  
Resort Association

Northstar California

Placer County

Placer County Water  
Agency

Sagehen Creek Field  
Station - UC Berkeley

Sierra Business Council

Sierra County

Sierra Watch

Sierra Watershed  
Education Partnerships

Squaw Valley and  
Alpine Meadows

Tahoe Truckee  
Sanitation Agency

Town of Truckee

Trout Unlimited

Truckee Donner  
Land Trust

Truckee Donner Public  
Utility District

Truckee Meadows  
Water Authority

U.S. Army Corps of  
Engineers

USDA Forest Service



1048

December 21, 2015

Placer County Community Development Resource Agency  
Environmental Coordination Services  
c/o Stacy Wydra  
3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190  
Auburn, CA 95603  
[cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov)

Dear Ms. Wydra,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Project (MVWPSP).

The mission of the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) is to bring the community *Together for the Truckee* to protect, enhance and restore the Truckee River watershed. Based on our mission, we reviewed the plan with interest and provide the following comments.

#### **TRWC supports open space**

The Truckee River Watershed Council supports the preservation of open space. The ecological benefits include but are not limited to protection of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, safeguarding water quality and water supply by maintaining infiltration of surface water, hydrologic connectivity and carbon sequestration. Beyond the ecological benefits, people experience restorative scenic landscapes and places to recreate.

The MVWPSP could link existing open space extending from Waddle Ranch to the Mt. Rose Wilderness and Toiyabe National Forest. This would maintain a migration corridor for the Loyalton Deer Herd, bird species and other wildlife. The proposal seeks to directly protect some 6,000 acres of open space in the East Parcel of Martis Valley. This area includes East Martis Creek and its tributaries, as well as the headwaters of Juniper Creek, another tributary to the Truckee River. Thus, **TRWC supports the transfer of development rights from the East Parcel to the West Parcel.**

#### **Still Needed: Stronger protections and completing the habitat restoration**

We understand there are options for the East Parcel to either be acquired by land trusts or be placed under a conservation easement. **Our recommendation is for acquisition of the parcel by the land trusts.** Should a conservation easement be approved, we strongly recommend the easement require habitat restoration and water quality protection.

As a result of historic land use disturbances in Martis Valley, TRWC conducted the Martis Watershed Assessment (2012). The assessment shows the need for restoration through Martis Valley, including the East Parcel. **We strongly request identifying and funding restoration in the East Parcel as a condition of approval.**

Truckee River Watershed Council is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

1048-1

1048-2



**Stormwater management and snow storage**

MVWPSP's location within Martis Valley makes the protection of water quality crucial. While low impact development methods and active treatment systems have been incorporated into the plan, Martis Valley West could set the standard for stormwater treatment in alpine development. ***We request the most robust standard of stormwater management and snow storage be a condition of approval.***

I048-3

We acknowledge there are some parties with concerns about the proposed development of the West Parcel with regard to transportation, noise and utilities. We respect these concerns but note that these areas are beyond the purview of our mission and thus we are not commenting.

In conclusion, TRWC's goal is to complete 50 high priority projects in the next ten years in order to improve the health and function of the Truckee River watershed. Restoration and protection within Martis Valley consistently ranks as a top priority for TRWC, our stakeholders, and the community at large. The Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan is an opportunity to fix water quality and habitat problems.

I048-4

Thank you again for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Lisa Wallace  
Executive Director



Michele Prestowitz  
Program Manager

---

**IO48**

**Truckee River Watershed Council**  
**Lisa Wallace, Executive Director**  
**Michele Prestowitz, Program Manager**  
**December 21, 2015**

---

**IO48-1**

The comment expresses support for the transfer of development rights from the East Parcel to the West Parcel and preservation of the East Parcel, as proposed by the MVWPSP project. As stated on page 3-11 of the Draft EIR, the commitment to preserve the East Parcel is a central component of the Specific Plan. For this reason, the Specific Plan includes policies ensuring that, if the Specific Plan is approved, the entire East Parcel would be permanently preserved as open space. These policies are included in Chapters 3 and 6 of the MVWPSP (Policies LU-2.2, LU-2.3, and OS-2).

**IO48-2**

The comment expresses support for acquisition of the East Parcel by land trusts and for restoration in the East Parcel as a condition of approval. As stated on page 3-11 of the Draft EIR, the mechanism for preserving the East Parcel would consist of either (1) the sale of the East Parcel to a land trust or similar organization, or (2) recordation of a conservation easement restricting its use. The project proponents will consider the request and recommendations included in this comment; however, it is anticipated that if an easement is in place rather than acquisition by a land trust, then the East Parcel would continue to be commercially harvested, consistent with the Timberland Production zoning. Please see Response OI17-6 for a discussion of the land conservation easement.

To the extent that the East Parcel is in need of restoration, this is an existing condition that would not be made worse by the proposed project, because no new uses are proposed for the East Parcel. Therefore, it is not necessary or required for the project to fund restoration efforts.

**IO48-3**

The comment requests that the MVWPSP include the most robust standards for stormwater management and snow storage. As further described on pages 2-24, 3-25, 3-27 through 3-29 of the Draft EIR, and in Chapter 15, "Hydrology and Water Quality," the proposed onsite drainage would be designed to ensure that there are no substantial changes to the hydrology of the existing watersheds. BMPs to meet Lahontan RWQCB regulations would be installed at snow storage areas, and all snowmelt would be diverted to the MVWPSP drainage system. In addition, Appendix E of the MVWPSP provides a list of BMPs anticipated to be used to protect water quality.

Project design and construction must comply with State and County standards for protection of water quality, as discussed in Impacts 15-1 and 15-2. As stated on pages 15-19 and 15-21, mitigation identified in the Draft EIR would ensure that impacts related to water quality would be less than significant. The comment does not specify what additional measures would be appropriate. Given that adequate mitigation has been identified, it would not be necessary to apply additional conditions of approval on the project.

**IO48-4**

The comment cites others' concerns related to transportation, noise, and utilities, but supports the MVWPSP as an opportunity to fix water quality and habitat problems. This comment is acknowledged.

**Shirlee Herrington****1049**

**From:** Mike Urban <mikeurbanmail@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 28, 2015 10:27 AM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Cc:** julieurban01@gmail.com; Den Satake; Tricia Satake  
**Subject:** Martis Valley West Parcel 2014032087 Draft EIR

I am strongly opposed to the proposed development.

I am a homeowner on Martis Peak Road in Truckee. After many years of searching, we chose Martis Peak to get away from congestion and houses packed together. The proposed development will bring another Tahoe Donner to our backyard; the very thing we sought to avoid.

If that development goes forward, it will probably be the catalyst that will send us away from Tahoe, in search of a less built-up area.

Thanks,

Mike Urban  
415-302-6050

1049-1

**I049**

---

**Mike Urban**  
**November 28, 2015**

---

I049-1

The comment expresses opposition to the MVWPSP. The comment does not specifically address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIR, however. The Placer County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will take the commenter's opinions regarding the merits or qualities of the proposed MVWPSP into consideration when making decisions regarding the project.

**Shirlee Herrington****1050**

**From:** Ellie <tahoellie@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2015 4:46 PM  
**To:** Placer County Environmental Coordination Services  
**Subject:** Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2014032087) comment for the record  
**Attachments:** Dec 2015 GB.pdf

Please accept this comment for the record for the:

Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2014032087)

Regards, Ellie Waller

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Ellie <tahoellie@yahoo.com>  
**To:** Joanne Marchetta TRPA <jmarchetta@trpa.org>; Shelly Aldean TRPA GB <shelly@tristatecommercial.com>; Nancy McDermid TRPA GB <nmcdermid@me.com>; Tim Cashman TRPA GB <tc@thecashmancompanies.com>; Casey Beyer TRPA GB <caseybeyer01@yahoo.com>; Larry Sevison TRPA GB <lpsverson@sbcglobal.net>; Clem Shute TRPA GB <shutetpa@gmail.com>; Tim Carlson TRPA GB <tc@tcarlson.biz>; Bill Yeates TRPA GB <jwytrpa@gmail.com>; Hal Cole TRPA GB <halcole@charter.net>; Elizabeth Carmel TRPA GB <lizcarmel@gmail.com>; Marsha Berkbigger TRPA GB <mberkbigger@charter.net>; Jim Lawrence TRPA GB <jlawrence@dcnr.nv.gov>; Mark Bruce TRPA GB <mbrucetpa@gmail.com>; Sue Novasel TRPA GB <bosfive@edcgov.us>; Barb Cegavske TRPA GB <bkccegavske@sos.nv.gov>  
**Cc:** Julie Regan TRPA <jregan@trpa.org>; John Hester TRPA <jhester@trpa.org>; Charlie Donohue TRPA APC <cdonohue@lands.nv.gov>; Lee Plemel TRPA APC <lplemel@carson.org>; Mike LeFevre TRPA APC <mlefevre@fs.fed.us>; Mike Riley TRPA APC <rileski13@gmail.com>; Eva Krause TRPA APC <ekrause@washoecounty.us>; Steve Teshara TRPA APC <SteveTeshara@gmail.com>; Bob Larsen TRPA APC <rlarsen@waterboards.ca.gov>; Hope Sullivan TRPA APC <hsullivan@co.douglas.nv.us>; Roger Trout TRPA APC <roger.trout@edcgov.us>; Jason Drew TRPA APC <JDrew@ncenet.com>; Shawna Brekke-Read TRPA APC <sbrekke-read@cityofslt.us>; Paul Esswein TRPA APC <pge2@sbcglobal.net>; Scott Weavil TRPA APC <scott.weavil@gmail.com>; Zach Hymanson TRPA APC <zhymanson@gmail.com>; Eric Guevin TRPA APC <eguevin@tahoe-fire.com>; John Marshall TRPA Legal <jmarshall@trpa.org>; Tom Lotshaw TRPA Public Info <tlotshaw@trpa.org>; Marja Ambler TRPA <mambler@trpa.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2015 4:39 PM  
**Subject:** Public Comment TRPA December 16, 2015 Governing Board

Dear Governing Board Members,  
Please read the attached public comment- it's a lengthy article about conservation easements recently published in the Fall 2015 Edition of Sun Valley Home and Design

Please accept this public comment for the record.

Regards, Ellie Waller

1050-1

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

Please take the time to read the attached article and understand a selfless act and valid use for conservation easements.

"In perpetuity" is a humbling piece of legal language that carries a weight difficult to comprehend. As illusive as the idea of forever, it is an urgent prayer sent into infinity that a piece of unique land will be preserved as it is today forever, or "in perpetuity."

## In Perpetuity

### Preserving a Family Ranch for All Time

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY Diane Josephy Peavey



"In perpetuity" is a humbling piece of legal language that carries a weight difficult to comprehend. As illusive as the idea of forever, it is an urgent prayer sent into infinity that a piece of unique land will be preserved as it is today forever, or "in perpetuity."

Specifically, these words are the heart of the legal document for a conservation easement. The landowner agrees to sell to the buyer (usually a nonprofit organization like [The Nature Conservancy](#) or land trust such as the [Wood River Land Trust](#), occasionally a federal, state or local agency) all of the future development rights to the land specified in the conservation

I050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

easement. The owner continues to own the land, and, if the property is a working landscape, provisions are made for the family to continue ranching or farming it following best conservation practices.

Naturally, an easement reduces the market value of the ranch because the property can never be developed should the family ever choose to sell out. On the other hand, for buyers interested in the preservation of open space and wildlife habitat, the conservation protections can be seen as an enhancement.

**But even more concerning for families than this “forever” arrangement is the responsibility they assume for generations to come.** What follows is the story of my family’s ranch, Flat Top Sheep Company, and how we came to put it into a conservation easement.



When our family began to think about what a conservation easement could mean to our large Idaho ranch, we were absorbed in an immediate crisis in which future generations played little or no part. We—my husband and I, our son, and his sons—teetered on disaster as we looked at every conceivable possibility to save Flat Top Sheep Co., our sheep and cattle ranch in south

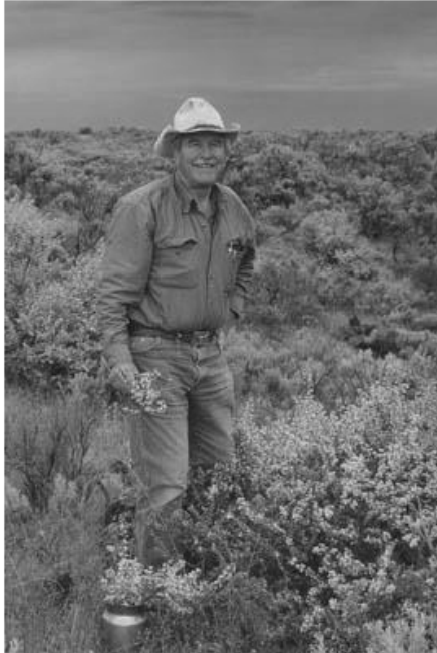
I050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

central Idaho. The land was my family's identity, our home and livelihood and had been for four generations.

These ranch lands are a sprawling property north of Carey, in the Little Wood River drainage, a part of a huge ecosystem that provides natural habitat areas and migratory corridors for wildlife and an array of spectacular birds. At the same time, it is only a ridgeline away from the actively developing resort communities of the Big Wood River Valley.



John Peavey

Flat Top Sheep Co. was started in the late 1920s by my husband's grandfather, John Thomas, a Gooding businessman and banker who was twice appointed to the U.S. Senate. Every year he ran sheep north from Twin Falls through the Little Wood River and Big Wood River Valleys, over Galena Summit and into the backcountry of the Stanley Basin on the annual migration and life cycle of these animals.

Thomas's daughter, Mary, and her son, John, grew up immersed in the rhythms of ranch life and the land. Years later, in the early 1980s, I was brought into this life—an urban-raised, new wife.

I approached the landscape starry-eyed. The wild, rugged and lovely Western landscape was thrilling. I knew little about what that meant economically, emotionally or environmentally, or how the land would dominate my life far into the future. But I did realize almost immediately

1050-1  
cont.



Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

that ranching, farming and rural communities were in crisis, not only in Idaho but across the United States.

In the 1980s, there was a nationwide exodus from the land caused by farm credit policies that promised the moon but soon backfired as commodity prices began to spiral downward. Bankers and other lenders panicked, and foreclosures on delinquent loans became commonplace. Rural America began shutting down.

Only several decades earlier, agriculture was the livelihood of over 50 percent of Americans. Today, less than 2 percent of our population is involved in raising food from the land.

It was a devastating crisis, impacting not only the quality and sources of our food today, but it also spelled impending disaster for our open spaces across the country, which for generations had been largely preserved by ranching and farming families.

As the land values and commodity prices crashed in the 1980s and 1990s, many ranchers and farmers had little choice but to sell out to eager developers ready to redesign vast open space into population centers. This was an unacceptable option for our family.

It was then that we began to pay attention to the growing phenomena of conservation easements as a way to protect the open space, working landscape, natural habitat and wildlife that surrounded us.



1050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

We first learned of this opportunity from The Nature Conservancy, specifically its brilliant, quiet, behind-the-scenes strategist, assistant director Lou Lunte and former state director Laura Hubbard who worked tirelessly with us over many years to make our conservation dreams a reality. There was also important strategy input from the Wood River Land Trust and a new organization called the Pioneer Alliance that comprises environmental groups, representatives of federal, state and local agencies, and local landowners. The Alliance explored conservation measures to save the Pioneer Mountains-Craters of the Moon ecosystem and its working families who had preserved that landscape for generations. The timing was right. Conservation easements provided new hope for struggling ranchers and farmers whose only means of help prior to this had been to succumb to pressures from developers and leave their homes forever.

All the while the challenge of “what if” haunted us. How to speak for future generations? Will these things continue to be of value 100 years from now?

Through the work of the Pioneer Alliance, it became clear that our ranch made up a sizable part of the lands the group was trying to save. Our open space had been well cared for by our family since the 1920s, making it an appealing project for protection.

Little did we know when we began the process that it would take over five years to complete and would be a nearly full-time effort, one that became our life’s work. It was a time of daily stress as we worried over language in the legal documents, over every acre we hoped to save for family use, every field we needed for our sheep and cattle, every stream and spring we wanted to protect, every acre we farmed, every access road into the backcountry, every scarred hillside that needed to be closed to rogue ATVs in trespass. We considered the inholding campground surrounded by our private lands, beaver habitat along creeks, sagebrush hills for sage grouse, migratory wildlife corridors, all the land that could provide income beyond our ranching lives, our son’s dreams of a hunting lodge, and my dream of a few cabins for a writers’ retreat. It all needed to be itemized and protected in this legal document.

All the while the challenge of “what if” haunted us. How to speak for future generations? Will these things continue to be of value 100 years from now? Will food continue to come from the land for the generations ahead?

And what of the adversities that we fretted over as we reworked easement language and the huge changes ahead for our industry? Today, there is growing carelessness around us, from the beer cans thrown from pickups crossing our lands, to weekend hunters trying to find the quickest (often reckless) way to favorite hunting spots. What of wolves, GMO foods, sage grouse, hunting lodges, water flows? Will these issues exist and, if so, what will they look like in 30 years? How can we sign with confidence?

But then, how can we NOT sign and sign immediately when we see the land abused and in jeopardy? Through conservation easements, we have found partners who have not only taken the threat of development rights off the table but are committed to helping us handle many of these challenges and improve our conservation activities on the land—something we could not do alone.

1050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015



1050-1  
cont.

The final easement was completed in 2013. Close to 23,000 acres became a series of conservation easements to be managed as a working landscape and for the preservation of the

Page 6 of 10

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

land and the habitat it provides to wildlife “in perpetuity.” In the end, this was made possible with the help of foundations, private funders, and state, federal and local government agencies who understood the importance of preserving such a huge swath of land.

This was our story. In moments of indecision and doubt we took courage from the actions of those who went before us, such as John and Elizabeth Stevenson, who were the first in the area to put a conservation easement on their farmland in the Silver Creek landscape. Their restoration efforts today filter farm water from the north as it passes through their land on the way into Silver Creek and, with the addition of a large pond that now covers land where cattle once grazed, they have created a wetland filled every year with returning birds and waterfowl. We learned from the Purdy family and John and Elaine French, among others, who have made large easement contributions across their lands to protect the pristine waters and world-famous trout fishing in Silver Creek.

Once we began exploring conservation easements, we watched this concept fan out to include several of our Carey and South Valley neighbors, among them the Bairds, the Bartons and the Molyneuxes. These agreements—some completed, some ongoing—have saved valuable wildlife habitat and migratory corridors and, in many cases, given families the economic breathing room to protect, improve and remain on the land they have cared for throughout the last century and that hold their personal histories.



In the end, for us, it is the personal story of our family, its past and now its future. It is also about the Laidlaws, sheep ranching pioneers who first homesteaded a large part of this land; and about

1050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

John Thomas, who began Flat Top Sheep Co.; Mary Brooks, his daughter; John, Tom, Cory and Jake his grandson, and great, and great, great grandsons who continue the tradition. It is about the Burks—Sam, Dennis and Denny—the three generations of sheep managers who worked side by side with our family for over 80 years. It is about every Flat Top Sheep Co. herder, from Dirty Dutch over 60 years ago, to Efrahin and Wuilder today, and about every Scot, Basque and Peruvian who left his mark on a piece of aspen bark in this landscape. All of them will live on at Flat Top Sheep Co. now “in perpetuity.”

This article appears in the Fall 2015 issue of Sun Valley Home and Design

<https://www.sunvalleymag.com/Sun-Valley-Home-and-Design/Fall-2015/In-Perpetuity/index.php?requiressl=true#comments>

I050-1  
cont.

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

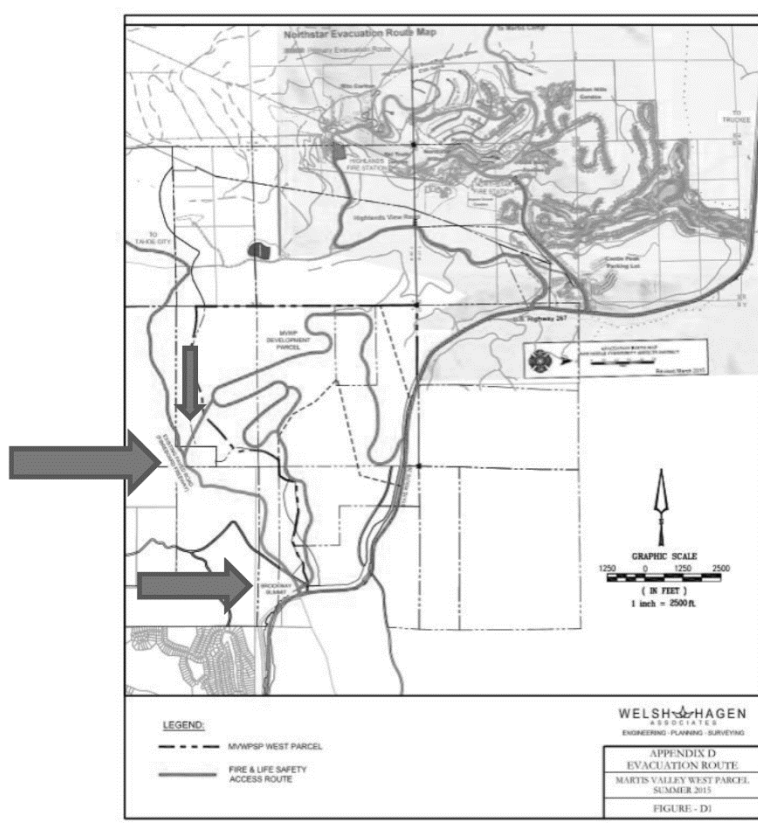
### Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan DEIR

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/~media/cdr/Planning/West-Parcel-Specific-Plan/PublicDraftSpecificPlan/M%20-%20Appendix%20D%20-%202010-16-15.pdf>

A definitive explanation why TRPA is not a party to the environmental documentation for the MVWPSP when lands of the Tahoe Basin are included, even though minimally as Emergency Evacuation routes, is needed.

Any use of lands in the Tahoe Basin must be approved by the TRPA as prescribed by The Compact. See attached Evacuation Route map which should have included a notation of Tahoe Basin Boundary line in the legend and on the map.

Primary Evacuation Route onto Brockway Summit to access SR 267 and secondary EVA onto Fibreboard Freeway directing folks to Tahoe City are clearly in the Basin (blue arrows).



This diagram/map is included in the October 2015 Martis Valley West Parcel Specific Plan Public Review documentation that has not been through public comment yet. Appendix D Figure D1

1050-2

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista Resident  
Comments for the Record TRPA Governing Board

December 16, 2015

Many iconic areas that are not considered National Treasures or Outstanding National Resource Waters have ridgeline protection ordinances. Trading zoning to enable a conservation easement outside the Tahoe basin while proposing residential development on lands that will affect the Tahoe basin is astounding.

TRPA not having specific ridgeline goals, policies and ordinances defies logic.

You as a Board have the authority to request Staff draft, study and present to you and the APC (and ultimately your Board approve) ridgeline protection ordinances for Tahoe's iconic scenic vistas. With the upcoming Regional Plan Update in 2016 it is an appropriate time to start the process for this controversial issue.

We, the public, will not waiver in our commitment to establish ridgeline protections.

I050-3

---

**I050****Ellie Waller**  
**December 14, 2015**

---

- I050-1 The comment provides an attachment that describes the process by which a ranching family placed conservation easements on their land, and how those easements have saved valuable wildlife habitat and migratory corridors while allowing families to remain on the land (page 7 of the attachment). The comment does not specifically address the content, analysis, or conclusions in the Draft EIR. The approach discussed in the attachment is similar to the intent of the proposed land conservation easement or land acquisition of the East Parcel—the protection of habitat, including migratory corridors in perpetuity. If the land conservation easement is enacted, commercial timber harvesting would continue to occur on the site, so, like the ranch mentioned in the attachment, it would retain some economic value under TPZ zoning for the current owner. However, if the East Parcel is acquired by a land trust, it would no longer be used primarily for commercial timber harvest, and could be used for public recreation.
- I050-2 The comment states that any use of lands in the Tahoe Basin must be approved by TRPA. No TRPA documentation is required for the MVWPSP, because no actions would occur in the Basin. All development would occur outside of the Basin. The use of Fibreboard Freeway as a secondary EVA would not require action by TRPA, because no ground would be disturbed and no change in use would occur. Please also see Master Response 2 regarding TRPA evaluation.
- I050-3 The comment that TRPA should adopt a ridgeline ordinance is noted, but Placer County cannot compel TRPA to take action on any ordinance. As described above, the project site is not within the Tahoe Basin or under TRPA jurisdiction.